

Guest Writer:

Hazel Edwards' 10-Minute Writing Exercise

A local primary school invites adult writers, parents or school workers to join their Prep to Grade 1 students who write for 10 minutes on chosen topics. Then they share the reading. Try it.

Here are some 10-minute starter topics:

1. Unfortunately, the key didn't fit.
2. The mobile rang and I could hear some background noises.
3. She wore 26 diamond rings, but her old, baggy clothes didn't match
4. That day, the water turned into lemonade.
5. Unluckily, I had a blister and no food, and it was VERY cold on the mountain.

Educator-author and writing mentor Hazel Edwards is best known for picture book and now film and touring musical , 'There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake' but she also takes workshops on 'Writing a Non Boring Family History' and 'Authorpreneurship'. 'Hijabi Girl' is her co-written junior novel.

Here was the topic for this week. Hazel was the 10 minute guest. Try the activity yourself.

1. **'In a dark cave': Use this sentence to begin your story:
'The cave was dark and I couldn't see my brother...'**

The cave was dark and I couldn't see my brother. All the lights went out five minutes ago.

'Keep together,' said the guide. His voice echoed. 'It's a power failure.'

That was scary. We were a long way down. We had climbed 103 steps. I counted them on the way down. I could hear water dripping down the walls. I put out my right hand, and the cave wall was wet. I could feel the water, and smell the damp cave. But I couldn't see my hand.

'Grab the hand rail,' said the guide who had switched on his headlight. He wore a helmet torch. But that light only showed where he was looking. The shafts of his headlight moved around the giant cave.

'Got you!'

1. http://www.hazeledwards.com/page/aspiring_writers.html

I jumped. ‘Stop it!’

My brother was playing tricks on me again. He had grabbed my shoulder.

We were on a school trip to the old salt mine. It was a very famous cave that many tourists visited. On the rock walls, were cave drawings of early men and their animals.

I expected the salt to be white. But the walls were a dirty grey, like rock. That’s when I could see them. When the lights were still on. Now it was grey-black and spooky, but I like adventures.

‘In the olden days, the salt miners used to work here for twelve hour shifts, in the dark,’ said the guide. ‘Look up there.’

The guide’s helmet light shone on the shape of a miner.

‘Is he real?’ asked my brother. His voice was scared.

‘No,’ said the guide. ‘He was carved out of salt. The miners made that sculpture in memory of some of their mates.’

Just then, the lights went on.

I started climbing the 103 steps out of the mine.

My brother ran up the steps, ahead of me. He’s the faster twin.

Hazel’s Hints:

1. Add some dialogue to make the characters real.
2. Use short sentences to create suspense.
3. Add smells and sounds and sights and textures.
4. Have a twist for the end.

Hazel did visit a real salt mine in Poland, and used some of her memories. But the lights did not go out in the real salt mine. Sometimes you can use real things in your stories, but then play around. Hazel did take 10 minutes to write this. But in her other stories she does lots of drafts.

1. http://www.hazeledwards.com/page/aspiring_writers.html